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L I F F Y:  
*vid. H. 10 (P. 1)*  
F A B L E.

IN IMITATION of the  
*Metamorphosis* of OVID.

Address'd to a YOUNG LADY.

With an EPISTLE DEDICATORY,

In which is contained

*An Essay upon the Metamorphosis of OVID.*

---

By \*\*\*\*\* \*\*, Esq;

---

*Quæ mea culpa tamen? nisi si ludisse, vocari  
Culpa potest, nisi culpa potest, et amasse vocari. Ovid.*

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L O N D O N:

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THE

LIFE OF

JOHN RUSKIN

BY JOHN RUSKIN

WITH A HISTORY OF HIS WORKS

BY JOHN RUSKIN

AND A HISTORY OF HIS WORKS

BY JOHN RUSKIN

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To \*\*\*\*\* Esq;

*The Epistle Dedicatory.*

In which is contain'd,

An ESSAY upon the *Metamorphosis* of Ovid.

DEAR \*\*\*\*



THE more I consider the Nature of Dedications, the more I wonder at the Meanness of our Brethren, the POETS, in prostituting to Flattery, a Subject so aptly calculated for the Service of Friendship. Tho' at the same time, when I reflect upon the Drift of most Dedications, I think it in one Thing happy for the Authors, that they make not their Friends the Patrons of them. There is something monstrously servile, as well as ridiculous, in chusing Persons to espouse one's Writings, whose Disapprobation would be one's Credit; and whose Approbation one's Discredit.

How well I have avoided both these Errors in my Choice of You, I need not, because I know, you would not have me say; I need not, because, I know, however agreeable it would be to others, no Subject would be so little agreeable to You, as that of Yourself. To your Pleasure, like a true Friend, I sacrifice my own.

I shall therefore turn my Thoughts to entertain You with some critical Observations upon that Part of *Ovid's* Character, which I have endeavour'd to imitate; such Observations, as are founded upon the Authority of unquestionable Judges.



OVID seems to have valued himself more upon his *Metamorphosis*, than upon any other of his Works; if the Conclusion at the End of the fifteenth Book be, as we have no Reason to doubt, of *Ovid*.

*Famque Opus exegi: quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes,  
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas.* —

But if you should object, that an Author is the most improper Judge of his own Performances; remember at the same time, that the Judgment of *Ovid*, has been confirm'd by the Concurrence of all the most judicious Criticks; and that as the *Metamorphosis* has been translated into all the modern Languages; so has it been translated into the most antient classical, the *Greek*; as a Poem, in the Opinion of the Undertaker, excelling all the Compositions of *Greece*, in this Way of Writing, for Beauty and Delight. *Planudes*, if you have any Curiosity to know, is the Translator's Name.

PERHAPS you may not be displeas'd to hear the Opinion of the Learned, upon the Union of the Fables, in this divine Poem. *Borrichius* pretends that in the *Metamorphosis* is found a wonderful Link, or Chain, of all the Fables of Antiquity. As *Vossius* admires that continual Sequel without Interruption, and that wonderful Texture of so many different Things, wove together with such Artifice, from the Beginning of the World, according to the *Gentile* Computation, down to his own Times; *Hercules Ciofanus* is no less ravish'd with this Juncture of Fable with Fable, executed with such Art, such Excellence and Grace, that notwithstanding the Diversity of Matter taken in Hand, the Poet weaves every part so cunningly together; that all, if we believe this Critick, appears but one Series. And lastly, to conclude, *Cantier* testifies, that he was so charm'd with the beautiful Order that links these Fables together, that he could not refrain from abridging the whole Work following the Method of his Author; the better to comprehend the Spirit of the Poet in Miniature, as in a Picture that could represent it to him at one Sight, and one View.

You will hardly believe me capable of so industrious an Attempt, tho' undertaken, I confess, upon a different Design,  
not



not charm'd, like *Canter*, with the fancied Order that links these Fables together, but to discover, if possible, the Deficiency of that Order, which he, as I suspected, wrongly imagin'd, link'd them together.

FOR trusting to his Suffrage, with that of the above-mention'd Criticks, would not you conclude, the Union in the *Metamorphosis* so perfect, so entire, that one Fable was immediately productive of another? In short, that the grand Design was every where as strictly observ'd as the Ordonnance in Painting? And that all the Parts bore so close, tho' secret, a Relation to one another, that, as in *Epick* Poetry, they turn'd upon the same Center?

BUT on the contrary, there is no such Union throughout the *Metamorphosis* of *Ovid*. Most of the Fables, so far from contributing to one Design and one Action, or different Designs and different Actions. And most of them join'd with so little Connection, that it is impossible, without the Gift of a miraculous Memory, to retain them in the same Order the Poet gives them. If you scruple to take my Word for this, you will make no Objection, I am sure, to the Authority of *Rapin*; who, talking of the Regularity of *Virgil* in his *Aeneid*, tells us, that *Ovid* did much Violence to himself, to unite his *Metamorphosis*, and shut them up, (as he terms it) in one Design. In which, says he, he did not succeed so well, as afterwards in his *Elegies*; where, generally speaking, we find a certain Turn which closes the Design, and makes of the Whole a Work tolerably just, in Regard to its several Parts.

IF then, the Unity of Action be so ill observ'd in the *Metamorphosis*, What Colour of Excuse, you will naturally object, can you devise, to bring off *Ovid*? How will you clear your Author from the Imputation of that Confusion of Fables, so destructive of the *Epopæa*; and held, for Instance, so monstrous in the Poems of *Statius*? To this I answer, that *Ovid* in his *Metamorphosis* did not propose to himself the Example of the *Epick*, but that of the *Cylick* Poets; who aim'd at nothing more than a plain Narration of Fables, slightly connected together; and that, tho' this slight Connection is without Doubt destructive of the *Epopæa*, yet, as *Bossu* judiciously

ciously observes, one cannot in Justice condemn the Author of Ignorance in his Art, unless he aim'd at an *Epopæa*, such as that of *Homer* and *Virgil*, which is the Fault of *Statius* both in his *Thebaid* and *Achilleid*.

FOR, in Respect to the Unity of Action to be observ'd in every patticular Fable, (which, if observ'd, is Unity sufficient for the *Cylick* Poet : ) In that *Ovid* deserves the highest Commendation. And so far, we may very well allow the Encomium of Sir *Samuel Garth* upon the Transitions of our Author. With how much Ease, says he, does *Ovid* slide into some new Circumstance, without any Violation of the Unity of the Story. The Texture is so artful, that it may be compar'd to the Work of his own *Aractine* ; where the Shade dyes so gradually, and the Light revives so imperceptibly, that it is hard to tell where the one ceases, and the other begins. This Unity is the first Thing to be observ'd in this Kind of Poetry : All the under-Machines must be so regularly laid, as to contribute to the grand Design.

THE Variety of these Machines, is another Thing to be admir'd in the Fables of *Ovid*.

To this Success, in the Structure of his Fables, it is chiefly owing, that *Ovid* is the most delightful of all the *Classick Authors* ; insomuch, that we may say of him, that he excels in the most excellent Part of Poetry. For Fable is so essential a Part of Poetry, that there is, justly speaking, no Poetry without it. *Theocritus*, in Spight of all his Criticks, in this must yield to *Bion* in the *Idyllium*, as *Horace* in the *Lyrick* to *Anacreon*. Fable is equally the Beauty of all Poetick Writings.

As to what regards the Stile, the Delicacy of *Ovid*, consists in nothing more than in his Repetitions ; which are always natural and easy. None of our *English* Poets enjoy this Excellence in so high a Degree, as the greatest of our *English* Poets, I had almost said, *Spencer* ; out of whose *Ida*, the following Stanza, compos'd of the two Epithets *soft* and *smooth*, is as beautiful as remarkable an Instance.

*Lower two Breasts stand, all their Beauties bearing,  
Two Breasts, as smooth and soft---but, ah, alas !*

*Their*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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*Their smoothest Softness far exceeds comparing,  
More smooth and soft: For nought that ever was,  
Where they are first, deserves a second Place:  
Yet each as soft and each as smooth as other,  
And when thou first try'st one, and then the other,  
Each softer seems than each, and each than each seems smoother.*

THIS Delicacy of Repetition, to which his natural Turn, delighting in these Softnesses, led him, is one Reason why *Ovid* excels, even himself, says Sir *Samuel Garth*, when he takes Occasion to touch upon the Passion of Love. *Martial*, in his Epigram to *Instantius*, ascribes the Success of *Ovid*, as well as *Virgil*, to the same Cause.

*Si dare vis nostra vires, animosque Thalix,  
Et victura petis carmina; da quod amem---  
Nec me Pelignus, nec spernet Mantua vatem,  
Si qua Corinna mihi, si quis Alexis erit.*

That is,

Wouldst thou inspire my Muse with nobler Fire,  
And read immortal Verse: With Love inspire.  
Me *Sulmo*, *Mantua* should declare divine,  
Mine were *Corinna*, were *Alexis* mine.

That is to say, were I but as much in Love as *Virgil* with *Alexis*, or *Ovid* with *Corinna*, I should write as nobly as *Virgil* or *Ovid*.

ANOTHER Beauty to be prais'd in *Ovid*, is the easy Flow of Eloquence in all his Speeches and Discourses: Where, in particular, he deserves the Commendation *Erasmus* gives him, speaking of his Stile in general, that he may pass for the *Cicero* of the Poets. Some squeamish Criticks call his Numbers Prose. But happy, in my Mind, the Poet that can write such Prose! On the contrary, we are told by *M. Annaeus Seneca*, that the very Prose of *Ovid* appear'd to be dissolv'd Verses. And the *French* Translations of this Author, dismember'd into Prose, sufficiently exemplify that Observation of *Horace*, that take away the Numbers from a good Poem, you will yet find in it

----- *Disjecti Membra Poetae.*

IT



IT is not so easy to obviate the Fault so often laid to his Charge, of not knowing when he has said enough, by his endeavouring to excel. How has he turn'd and twisted, says Mr. *Addison*, that one Thought of *Narcissus*, being the Person belov'd, and the Lover too?

*Cunctaque miratur quibus est mirabilis ipse.*

---- *Qui probat, ipse probatur.*

*Dum petit petitur, pariterque incendit et ardet.*

*Atque oculos idem qui decipit incitat error.*

*Perque oculos perit ipse suos.*

*Uror amore mei, flammæ moveoque feroque.*

Not but, as Sir *Samuel Garth* observes, *Ovid* deserves as much Praise for saying a great deal in a little, as Censure for saying a little in a great deal. None of the *Classick Poets* had the Talent of expressing themselves with more Force and Perspicuity.

*PHAETON* desires some Pledge of his Father's Tenderness, and asks to be trusted with his Chariot : *Apollo* answers,

*Pignora certa petis; do pignora certa timendo.*

THIS Energy of *Ovid* is most conspicuous in his Sentences, which *Hercules Ciofanes* justly admires for their Gravity, and which, according to *Daniel Heinsius*, he scatters thro' his Work with vast Address, and wonderful Agreement. It may be no disagreeable Entertainment to you to turn to the Original, and observe the happy Manner in which he introduces the following Sentences, mostly on various Subjects.

*Upon desperate Remedies in desperate Cases.*

*Cuncta prius tentata: sed immedicabile vulnus*

*Ense recidendum; ne Pars sincera trahatur.*

*Book 1. line 190, 191.*

*Upon the Short-sightedness of Mankind.*

*Usque adeo later Utilitas! B. 6. l. 438.*

*Pro Superi quantum mortalia Pectora cœcæ*

*Noctis habent! B. 6. l. 472.*

*Upon*

*Upon the ill Agreement of Majesty and Love.*

Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur  
Majestas & amor. B. 2. l. 846.

*Upon knowing the Right, and pursuing the Wrong.*

--- Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor. B. 7. l. 20.

*Upon the Chequer of Good and Ill in human Affairs.*

--- Usque adeo nulli sincera Voluptas;  
Sollicitique aliquid lætis intervenit. B. 7. l. 453, 454.

*Upon the Suspicion of Love.*

Credula res Amor est. B. 7. l. 826.

*Upon Mercy after Victory.*

----- Sæpe utile vinci  
Victoris placidi fecit Clementia multis. B. 8. l. 56, 57.

*Upon Boldness, generally attended with Success.*

----- Velle parum est. Sibi quisque profecto  
Fit Deus. Ignavis precibus Fortuna repugnat.  
B. 8. l. 72, 73.

*Upon the Danger of rash Valour.*

----- Licet eminus esse  
Fortibus--- nocet temeraria Virtus. B. 8. l. 406, 407.  
--- Fortis fugacibus esto.  
----- In audaces non est Audacia tuta. B. 10. l. 542.

*Upon Valour, impatient of Advice.*

Illa quidem monuit-----  
--- Sed stat monitis contraria Virtus. B. 10. l. 708, 709.

BUT here we must condemn another Quality of our Author, however agreeable to the general Taste, I mean his Points and Affectations, decried by all the better Criticks: 'Twas this, in all Probability, induc'd *Vauvassieur* to call the *Metamorphosis*, Une Essai de Jeunesse, *An Essay of Youth*, that wanted the

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

last Stroke of the Author ; and *Rapin* to say, *That he finds in him such Boyisms as he could not easily pardon, but for the Vivacity of his Wit, and the Je ne scai quoi of Happy in his Imagination.* This Observation of *Rapin*, which is in his Reflections upon *Aristotle*, may receive Light from another, in his Comparison of *Homer* and *Virgil* ; where, talking of the Simplicity of the Epithets in the *Greek* Poet, and the Brilliancy of those in later Authors, who will allow no Epithets to be tolerable, but such as bear a Counter-signification to the Words they are join'd with ; which vicious Tastes relish as a Piece of exquisite Delicacy ; observes, that *Ovid*, in his *Metamorphosis*, was the first that gave this false *Gusto* to the Age he lived in. Now, as Instances of these Points and Affectations cannot, I am certain, be but welcome to such as have a true Taste for Humour, I will give you the Pleasure of enjoying in this Place some of the most Extraordinary, without putting you to the Trouble of consulting the Original.

*Io the Charge of Argus, who had Eyes all round his Head,  
Lay still before him, tho' she lay behind.  
Ante oculos Io, quamvis averfus habebat.*

*Calisto mistaking Jupiter for Diana, hails him as a Deity,  
whom she prefers to Jupiter himself. Jupiter laughs and rejoices  
To hear himself before himself prefer'd.  
----- Ridet et audit,  
Et sibi preferri se gaudet.*

*Mercury asks Battus in the same Stile,  
Me, Traitor, to my self dost thou betray ?  
Risit Atlantiades, et, Me mihi, Perfide, prodis,  
--- ait ?*

THE two following, are Puns that may vie with any in *Milton*, who by the way has hazarded too much to please a vicious Age False Wit being as little ornamental to a true Genius, as Paint to a beautiful Face.



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*Venus* sitting down upon the Grass, and leaning upon  
*Adonis*,

*The Grass at once, at once the Boy she prest.*

—*Pressitque et gramen et ipsum.*

In the same Manner, *Phæbus* desires *Phaeton*, who asks him  
for his Chariot,

*My Counsel, Son, and not my Chariot use.*

—*Consilijs non Curribus utere nostris.*

*Narcissus* in Love with himself, exclaims,

*That Plenty makes him poor.*

----*Inopem me Copia fecit.*

And *Phaeton* cannot see his Way,

*For Darknefs blinds his Eyes with too much Light.*

*Suntque Oculis tenebræ per tantum Lumen obortæ.*

*Ceres* recounting to *Jupiter*, that she had heard her Daughter  
*Proserpine*, whom she had search'd thro' all the Earth, was  
taken down to Hell by *Pluto*, tells him,

*Long lost at length I've found her to my Cost,*

*For, to have found her so, is to have lost.*

*En quæsitæ diu tandem mihi nata reperta est,*

*Si reperire vocas, amittere certius.*

*Medea* inciting the Daughters of *Pelias* to stab their Father,  
whose Life she promises to renew by her Art, bids them,

*Come drench your Daggers in his aged Veins,*

*If any Share of Piety remains.*

*Stringite, ait, gladios, veteremq; haurite, cruorem--*

*Si Pietas ulla est.*

*While she that is most pious in her Heart,*

*First acts, deluded, the most impious Part.*

*His, ut quæque pia est, hortatibus impia prima est.*

*And, lest she should grow wicked, wicked grows.*

*Et, ne sit scelerata, facit scelus.*

*Althea* also, sacrificing her Son to do Justice to her Brothers,  
 Thus pious, thro' Impiety becomes.  
 Impietate pia est.

And *Myrrha* observing, that had not *Cyneras* been her Father, he might have been her Lover, complains,

*Nunc quia tam meus est non est meus, ipsaq; damno  
 Est mihi proximitas. Aliena Potentior essem.*

Which Lines are thus admirably turn'd by Mr. Dryden:

*But the Perverseness of my Fate is such,  
 That he's not mine, because he's mine too much;  
 Our Kindred-Blood debars a better Tie,  
 We might be nearer, were we not so nigh.*

If *Ovid* therefore, who knew how to put off these counterfeit Jewels to the best Advantage, if even *Ovid* has fail'd; how cautiously should we behave, who follow him with unequal Steps,

*Non Passibus equis.*

wanted we great Examples, such as *Seneca*, *Lucan*, *Martial*, and *Claudian*, who exceeds them all in these Conceits, to deter us from it?

*OVID* was perfect Master of the Greek Poets, as we may see by his frequent Imitations of them. By which, says *Tritonius*, he has made his *Metamorphosis* a Work necessary to all the Followers of the Muses. Never was Poet, continues he, who with such Diligence collected, or with such Learning, Elegance and Order, related the Fables as *Ovid*: Who, out of *Orpheus*, *Hesiod*, *Homér*, and other ancient Poets, compos'd a Work so excellent and noble, as may deservedly be call'd, the Glory of the *Latines*. And to the same Purpose, *Martinus*: I conceive, says that Author, in his various Lections, the Poet of *Sulmo* (which was the Birth-Place of *Ovid*) follow'd the Practice and Industry of *Zeuxes*, in the Composure of that admirable Work, the *Metamorphosis*. For, as that excellent Painter preparing to draw the Picture of *Helen*, assembled together the greatest Beauties of *Greece*; that after examining

mining their several Perfections, he might give to one what he gather'd from all: So *Ovid* out of innumerable Volumes of the *Græcian* Poets, first gather'd this Variety of Fables, and then reduc'd them, diffus'd before, into one Body; observing with Diligence the Beauty and Elegance of each Work; and thence transferring that Beauty and Elegance to his own; lest ought might be wanting to enrich and adorn his divine Poem. What vast Delight must it have given the Co-temporaries of *Ovid*, to contemplate in their Lecture of the *Metamorphosis*, such sweet Allusions to the antient Authors, as they must have rencounter'd every where thro' the whole Work! For one of the greatest Pleasures we are capable of receiving from the Poetry of our own Times, is, to have our Memories refresh'd with such Passages as are remarkable in that of older Date. For my Part, I freely own, I have been more sensibly touch'd with the Complaints of *Andromache*, in that excellent Tragedy, the *Distress'd Mother*; which allude to Several Passages of *Homer* and *Virgil*, particularly her Complaints in the last Scene of the third Act, than with those very Passages in the Originals themselves.

To conclude these tedious Observations, which have insensibly spun themselves out beyond my first Design; I believe it would puzzle the sharpest Critick to instance any Poet, *Greek* or *Latin* equal, at least superior to *Ovid* in his Descriptions. For which Reason, *Stephanus*, in his Preface to *Horace*, says, *Ovid*, in his *Metamorphosis*, may well be called the Poet of Painters, seeing his curious Descriptions afford such lively Patterns for their Imitation. And Mr. *Sewel* observes, that the Masters of Painting seldom attempt a Story of his, without consulting the Poet; and that some of their best Pieces are only so far beautiful and natural, as they come near the Descriptions of *Ovid*.

ONE Part of the Description, in which *Ovid* was peculiarly happy, is that which regards the Metamorphose or Transmutation of one Form into another. And this is the Point upon which the whole Fable ought to turn; this Transmutation, I mean; which should always rise, as in *Ovid*, from the natural Constitution



Constitution of the Things, whose Geniuses or Fairy Beings, if I may borrow the Expression, are introduc'd into the Fable.

AND now I am engag'd so far, it may not be improper to add a Word or two concerning the Nature of that River, which is the Subject of the following Poem. The *Liffy* takes its Rise in the Mountains of *Wicklow*, not far distant from a Hill which overlooks the rest, call'd by an old Legend, the *Widows Son*. The Place of its Rise but seven Miles from *Dublin*, is known by the Name of the *Liffy-head*. 'Twere needless to observe that these Parts were formerly cover'd with Wood, but that upon this Circumstance depends not a little of our Fable. You would hardly imagine that a River not above seven Miles distant from *Dublin* in its Rise, should take up above sixty, before it reach'd it in its Course, so full of Windings is the *Liffy*. For, first it issues from its Fountain directly forward towards the *South*, then turns with a large Sweep towards the *West*, then with another towards the *North*, then with another towards the *East*, where after all its Circuits, it runs thro' *Dublin*, as our old Poet *Necham* sings, into the Sea.

*Istum Dublini suscipit unda Maris.*

The Prospect of this River running from the Mountain, naturally strikes us with the Idea of a Nymph, such as in *Ovid*, running from a God. To which its winding Course greatly contributes; as also its Rapidity; which latter Quality is the chief Impediment they meet, who attempt the Navigation of the River.

THUS *Spenser* has built a Fable upon the *Mulla*, a River running thro' his Grounds at *Kilcolman*, in the County of *Cork*, where Queen *Elizabeth* gave him three thousand Acres of Land, for the Services he did the Crown, when Secretary to *Arthur Lord Gray of Wilton*, in those Days Deputy of *Ireland*. This River rising in the Mountain *Mole*, and running down into the Vallies, is join'd in her Course, by the *Bregog*, another River remarkable for its scattering Streams, which are every where interrupted by the Rocks they meet in their Way, before they lose themselves in the *Mulla*. How well

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well the Poet succeeds in the Fiction he raises upon these Grounds, I leave you to judge, sufficiently assur'd that nothing of so excellent a Master can want a Recommendation to so good a Taste.

*Old Father Mole (Mole hight that Mountain grey,  
That walls the north-side of Armulla Dale)  
He had a Daughter fresh as Flow'r of May,  
Which gave that Name unto that pleasant Vale;  
Mulla the Daughter of old Mole, so hight  
The Nymph, which of that Water-course has Charge,  
That springing out of Mole doth run down right  
To Buttevant, where spreading forth at large,  
It giveth Name unto that ancient City,  
Which Kilnemullah Cleped is of old:  
Whose cragg'd Ruins breed great Ruth and Pity,  
To Travellers, which it from far behold.  
Full fain she lov'd, and was belov'd full fain,  
Of her own Brother-River, Bregog hight,  
So hight because of his deceitful Train,  
Which he with Mulla wrought to win Delight.  
But her old Sire, more careful of her Good,  
And meaning her much better to prefer,  
Did think to match her with the Neighbour-Flood,  
Which Alla hight, Broad-water called far:  
And wrought so well with his continual Pain,  
That he that River for his Daughter won:  
The Dowre agreed, the Day assigned plain,  
The Place appointed where it should be done.  
Nath'less the Nymph her former Liking held;  
For Love will not be drawn, but must be led,  
And Bregog did so well her Fancy weld,  
That her good Will he got her first to wed.  
But for her Father sitting still on high,  
Did warily still watch which way she went,  
And eke from far observ'd with jealous Eye,  
Which Way his Course the wanton Bregog bent;*

*Him*

*Him to deceive, for all his watchful Ward,  
 The wily Lover did devise this Slight.  
 First into many Parts his Stream he shar'd,  
 That while the one was watch'd, the other might  
 Pass unesp'y'd, to meet her by the Way;  
 And then besides, those little Streams so broken,  
 He underground so closely did convey,  
 That of their Passage doth appear no Token,  
 Till they into the Mulla's Water slide.  
 So secretly did he his Love enjoy!  
 Yet not so secret but it was descride,  
 And told her Father by a Shepherd's Boy.  
 Who wond'rous wroth for that so foul Despight,  
 In great Avenger did roll down from his Hill,  
 Huge mighty Stones, the which encomber might  
 His Passage, and his Water-courses spill.  
 So of a River, which he was of old,  
 He none was made, but scatter'd all to nought,  
 And lost among those Rocks into him rold  
 Did lose his Name: So dear his Love he bought!*

You will easily agree that there could not be found a better  
 Example for the foregoing Rules, than this incomparable Fa-  
 ble of *Spenser*. Tho' at the same time, I fear you will observe,  
 that by inserting it in this Place, I have studied more the Cré-  
 dit of my Essay, than Advantage of my Poem; which I am  
 sensible requires all that good-Nature, if not Partiality, with  
 which you usually indulge the Foibles of your Friends. A-  
 mong the Faithfullest of whom, you may admit,

*Your Humble Servant,*

\*\*\*\*\*





THE  
L I F F Y:

A  
F A B L E.

IN IMITATION of the  
*Metamorphosis of OVID.*

Address'd to a Y O U N G L A D Y.

**U**OY of my Life, whose Wit my Soul inspires  
With Rapture, as with Love thy Beauty fires!  
In whom my All of Pains or Pleasures dwell;  
Lodg'd in thy Smiles or Frowns, my Heav'n,  
Accept these Numbers of an humble Swain, (or Hell!  
Happy, if you approve their artless Strain. 6  
Numbers, were they an Honour, you might claim;  
Thine are these Numbers, for from Thee they came.

C The

The Poet Thine. Ah ! would not thou disown,  
 Then blest indeed, the Poet for thine own !  
 At least the Numbers for thine own refuse !  
 But Thou, that art my *Venus*, be my Muse !

I boast not to have seen the tuneful Train,  
 As <sup>1</sup> *Hesiod* saw them on th' *Ascræan* Plain ;  
 Nor to have slept the Charge of fabled Doves,  
 As <sup>2</sup> *Horace* slept beside th' *Apulian* Groves,  
 Then what the Pow'r my beating Breast alarms,  
 With Transports swelling like Poetic Charms ?  
 Thy God, <sup>3</sup> *Anacreon*, does these Transports move ;  
 Love my *Apollo* is, my Song is Love.

I N antient Days (those Days full happy were)  
 When Life was void of Art, as void of Care ;

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<sup>1</sup> *Ovid*, not in his *Metamorphosis*, but in his *Art of Love*, observes this of *Hesiod*, who fed a Flock upon the Plains of *Ascræa*, where he was born.

*Non mihi sunt visa Clio Clisq̃ue sorores,  
 Servanti pecudes vallibus, Ascræa, tuis.*

<sup>2</sup> As *Horace* boasts of himself in these Lines of the fourth Ode, Book the third.

*Me fabulosa Vulture in Appulo  
 Altricis extra limen Apulia,  
 Ludo fatigatumque somno.*

*Fronde nova puerum palumbes  
 Texere: mirum quod foret omnibus——*

*Ut tuto ab atris corpore viperis*

*Dormirem & ursis: ut premerer sacrâ*

*Lauroque, collataque myrto,*

*Non sine Diis animosus in fans.*

<sup>3</sup> In Allusion to the first Ode of *Anacreon*;

When Swains for Truth of Passion were approv'd,  
 And Maids for Merit, not for Lucre lov'd;  
 Among th' *Iernian* Nymphs for Beauty fam'd, 25  
 There dwelt a beauteous *Nais*, <sup>1</sup> *Livia* nam'd.  
 Form'd for all Tongues to praise, all Eyes admire.  
 Her Mother <sup>2</sup> *Lamia*, *Neptune* was her Sire.  
 For once as *Phœbus* shone with equal Ray,  
 Betwixt the rising and the falling Day, 30  
 This Island-Nymph, to shun the sultry Heat,  
 Sought in her mossy Cave a cool Retreat.  
 There, o'er the Billows mounting as he rode,  
 The sleeping Beauty touch'd the wat'ry God.  
 Expert of Hand he check'd the flowing Rein, 35  
 And from his Chariot lighting on the Main,  
 Sudden with his circumfluous Waves betray'd,  
 Thoughtless of such Mischance, th' affrighted Maid.  
 Hence *Livia* sprung, to bless the God's Embrace;  
 Doubly to bless, she sprung with ev'ry Grace; 40  
 With sweetest Innocence the Mind to move,  
 And Beauty to confirm the Heart to Love.  
 Yet Love, as from the worst of Foes, she fled,  
 And fear'd, she knew not why, the Nuptial Bed.

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<sup>1</sup> *Liffy*.

<sup>2</sup> *Lambay-Island*.



Oft *Neptune* chid her with a Father's Smile; 45  
 Oft as the God review'd *Ierne's* Isle;  
 Whose Presence, scarce more frequent on her Coast,  
*Albion*, of Isles the fairest Isle, cou'd boast;  
 With safer Hand to guide her lab'ring Oars,  
 Or speed her swelling Sails to foreign Shores. 50  
 " How long, fair Daughter, (thus the Monarch cry'd)  
 " Wilt thou defer the pleasing Name of Bride?  
 " If Mortals you reject; caught with those Charms,  
 " Know many a God of Rivers seeks thy Arms.  
 " For Love of thee my Fav'rite *Shannon* burns, 55  
 " Swoln with the Tribute of a thousand Urns.  
 " The sandy *Slane*; the Silver-streaming *Shure*;  
 " Full-flowing *Barrow*; rapid-winding *Newre*;  
 " Wide-spreading *Boyn*, the 2 Scene of future Fame;  
 " And Numbers more whom I omit to name. 60

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ierne*, the antient Name of *Ireland*, us'd chiefly in classical Authors, as by *Orpheus* and *Aristotle*, among the *Greek*. And among the *Latin*, by *Claudian*; as in his *Panegyrick*,

*Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne.*

And again in his *Stilico*,

— *Totam cum Scotos Iernem*

*Movit.*

Not to mention that of *Hadrianus Junius*,

*Illa ego sum Graiis olim glacialis Ierne*

*Dicta*—

<sup>2</sup> Famous for the Passage of King *William*.

BUT still, as he advis'd, the Virgin said,  
 " Give me, 'tis all I ask, to live a Maid.  
 " Nor do you give, nor do I ask for more,  
 " Than has of Gods been ask'd and giv'n before.  
 " *Dian* to *Jove* for this her Pray'rs addrest, 65  
 " And *Jove* to *Dian* granted this Request.

O'ER the fond Father the fair Child prevails,  
 " Perswasion deck'd with Beauty seldom fails.

BUT *Dian*, proud so bright a Nymph to gain,  
 With Joy admits her in her Virgin-Train. 70  
 Together to the Forests they repair,  
 The Mountain-Forests high in ambient Air;  
 To chase the shaggy Wolves, or tim'rous Harts;  
 Both arm'd with Quivers, both supply'd with Darts:  
 In Hunting-Garbs both negligently drest: 75  
 And both with naked Feet, and naked Breast.  
 Bare was the Goddess' Head, the Nymph's was bare:  
 Loose was the Nymph's, and loose the Goddess' Hair.  
 Such Charms the Mistress, such the Maid adorn:  
 But for their Bows of Silver and of Horn, 80  
 None well the Mistress from the Maid could know.  
 And wou'd the Maid but take the Silver Bow,

Or that of humbler Horn the Mistrefs take,  
The Mistrefs might the Maid, the Maid the Mistrefs make.

THIS *Venus* saw, and saw with jealous Eyes; 85  
For Jealousy can reach the very Skies.  
A Nymph so form'd to grace her sprightly Court,  
" Lost (thus the Goddess griev'd) to idle Sport!  
" A fit Companion thou with Brutes to rove!  
" Thy fit Companion, Nymph, is youthful Love. 90  
" Thy very Charms oppose thy own Desires,  
" And thy Face questions what thy Heart requires,  
" How canst thou think that lovely-rising Breast  
" Was made for other Use than to be prest?  
" At least (tho' fixt thy Rudeness to maintain) 95  
" Made to be sought, tho' to be sought in vain?

THUS wrathful, to herself the Goddess cry'd,  
And beckon'd wanton *Cupid* to her Side.

To whom. " Prepare, my Boy, thy keenest Dart,  
" Thou never-slow to take thy Mother's Part! 100  
" Subject yon Rebel-Nymph my Pow'r that flights,  
" And quits for stupid Sports my pleasing Rites.  
" On whom dull Coyness awkwardly intrudes.  
" Ill suits it with the Charming to be Prudes!  
" Deformity



“ Deformity stiff Virtue recommends,

105

“ But Beauty was ordain'd for better Ends.

To rouse the Boy there needed little Art,

‘ *Cupid* all know loves Mischief in his Heart.

‘ Down shoots the nimble Archer from the Skies,

(The well-stor'd Quiver rattles as he flies)

110

The Nymph in View: Bent was his deadly Bow,

And fixt his Shaft in Readiness to throw.

When now approaching, twangs the slacken'd String,

The feather'd Weapon whizzes on the Wing,

True to it's Aim, thy Breast, devoted Fair!

115

But thy own Goddess took thee to her Care:

She, from thy Bosom turn'd the slanting Dart,

The Virgin-Hand preserv'd the Virgin-Heart.

ROBB'D of his Prey, Love to superior Pow'r,

Stiffly submits; and waits a luckier Hour.

120

So when the Hawk comes fousing from the Skies,

And well-nigh fastens on his Subject-Prize;

The tender Eagle newly gone astray,

Pleas'd with her Ramble thro' th' aerial Way;

111

---

‡ In Allusion to the Descent of *Phæbus*, in the first Book of *Homer's Iliad*.

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‘ In Allusion to the Descent of *Phæbus*, in the first Book of *Homer’s Iliad*.



If chance at Hand the <sup>1</sup> royal Bird appears, 125  
 Drawn to her Rescne by maternal Fears:  
 He yields, reluctant to his own Desires,  
 And slow-receding fullenly retires.

Now down the Hill, (<sup>2</sup> Hill, not unknown to Fame,  
 Which owes to filial Love it's ancient Name) 130  
 The sportive Virgins chas'd the flying Prey;  
 When *Livia* hapless mis'd the common Way.  
 Here as she err'd, rous'd by the passing Hound  
 The Mountain-God appear'd with Osier crown'd;  
 A shaggy Skin upon his Back he wore, 135  
 And in his Hand a piny Jav'lin bore.  
 " <sup>3</sup> Say, gentle Swain (whatever be your Name)  
 " If God (whatever Deity you claim)  
 " Hast thou this Way the Virgin-Goddeſs ſpy'd?  
 To him the Nymph; to her the God reply'd; 140  
 With wild Commotions suddenly poſſeſt,  
 (His Heart began to beat within his Breſt,  
 His Tongue at Variance with his Mind to rove)  
 Reply'd, not of the Goddeſs, but of Love.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Mother-Eagle.

<sup>2</sup> Hill, call'd the *Widow's Son*. See the Epistle Dedicatory, Page xiv.

<sup>3</sup> In Alluſion to *Venus's* Speech to *Æneas*, in the firſt Book of *Virgil's Æn.*

At found of Love she leaves him to Despair ; 145  
And shoots into the Wood she knows not where.

FOR *Cupid* who had found the Task too hard,  
To reach the Virgin thro' her watchful Guard ;  
But, like a prudent Gen'ral, seem'd to yield,  
To make the surer of a doubtful Field ; 150  
Now for the Fight with double Fury burns :  
' So oft to Malice Disappointment turns.  
In his first Shot mild was the God's Intent,  
No Harm but Love, if Love's a Harm, he meant.  
His next was sped with a severer View, 155  
Was sped, not now to conquer, but undo.

TWO Darts he draws (as antient Bards have told)  
One tipt with Lead ; and one was tipt with Gold ;  
With Gold, Excess of Passion to inspire ;  
With Lead, base Metal, to repel Desire. 160  
Deep in the God he fix'd the golden Dart,  
Deep as the Leaden pierc'd the Virgin's Heart.

FLUSH'D with Disdain away the Virgin flies :  
With Hope the God pursues the charming Prize,  
Swift from the Hound as flies the tim'rous Deer, 165  
The Virgin fled upon the Wings of Fear.

D

Swift

Swift as the eager Hawk pursues the Dove,  
The God pursued upon the Wings of Love.

“ Ah ! stay (at length he cry'd) fair *Nais*, stay !

“ Thus tender Lambs remove from Beasts of Prey; 170

“ From Beasts of Prey thus well may they remove,

“ Death their Pursuit; but my Pursuit is Love.

“ You do not know what Lover you disdain;

“ Nor Mountain-herd am I, nor Forest-Swain.

“ But me a God, far as thy Eyes survey, 175

“ These Mountains vast, and Forests wide obey.

“ Nor with <sup>1</sup> *Olympus* need we blush to vie;

“ We too have Heights, that might the Heav'ns supply.

“ Nor mighty <sup>2</sup> *Atlas*, who the Skies up-bears;

“ We too have Shoulders that might prop the Spheres. 180

“ Not <sup>3</sup> *Latmos* better seated for Delight,

“ Where young *Endymion* meets the Queen of Night.

<sup>1</sup> *Olympus* is a Mountain so remarkable for its Height, that it is often taken for the Heavens. Thus the Poets call *Jupiter*

— *Stellantis rector Olympi.*

and the Heavens — *Domus Omnipotentis Olympi* — Virgil.

<sup>2</sup> *Atlas* the Poets feign bears up the Poles upon his Shoulders.

— *Ubi Steller Atlas*

*Axem humero torquet Stellis ardentibus aptum.*

<sup>3</sup> *Phæbe* say the Poets fell in Love with *Endymion* upon the Mountain *Latmos*. Valerius Flaccus.

*Latmius æstivâ residens venator in Umbra, &c.*

Propertius

*Nudus et Endymion Phæbi capisse Sororem*

*Dicitur, et unda concubuisse Dea.*

“ Not



- " Not <sup>1</sup> *Pindus* for melodious Lays,  
 " Where on his golden Lyre *Apollo* plays ;  
 " For Lays not more the<sup>2</sup> forked Hill renown'd ;  
 " Our Summits too the tuneful Maids have crown'd. 185  
 " Where oft, sweet Harmony, by turns they sing,  
 " The Voice attemper'd to the melting String.  
 " Ah! stay (for still she fled) fair *Nais*, stay!  
 " Thou dost not know the Dangers of the Way; 190  
 " What roughs, at Random flying, thou may'st meet  
 " What Rocks, injurious to the tender Feet.  
 " Tho' warn'd by me, some little Caution take;  
 " How cou'd I see thee suffer for my Sake!  
 " Ah! stay! my Speed I'll quit, quit you your Speed; 195  
 " Trust me, you fly much faster than you need.

WHILE thus soft-soothing he reveals his Mind;  
 She trembles at his loud'ning Voice behind,  
 And thick'ning Breath; which with a sultry Air  
 Glows on her Neck, and spreads her flowing Hair. 200

<sup>1</sup> *Pindus* sacred as well as *Parnassus* to the Muses, so *Virgil*

*Nam neque Parnassi vobis juga, nam neque Pindi, &c.*

<sup>2</sup> The forked Hill *Parnassus*, so call'd from it's double Summit, describ'd by *Lucan*.

*Cardine Parnassus gemino petit athera colle*

*Mons Bromio, Phœboque sacer.*

*Seneca. Gemina Parnassi nivialis arx trucem sonitum ded't.*

And lastly — *Summâque biverticis umbrâ Parnassi residens.*

Struck at the nigh Approach she turn'd aside,  
 And all her Wiles, her last vain Efforts, tried.  
 Close at her Heels the eager Lover bore,  
 And trod in ev'ry Step she trod before.

And now he seem'd to hold her ; now by Force 205  
 She seem'd to quit him, in the doubtful Course ;  
 So near the Strife ! The Virgin you'd have thought  
 Lost ev'ry Moment, ev'ry Moment caught !  
 At length all faint and breathless in the Chase,  
 (Her Heart the Blood, the Colour left her Face) 210

On her old Sire she casts her streaming Eyes,  
 " Confirm thy Grant ! thy Daughter, *Neptune*, aid !  
 " O ! give to die, if not to live a Maid !

When, as she spoke, her Limbs more plyant grew ; 215  
 Her waving Locks fall off in liquid Dew ;  
 Her panting Breasts in circling Waves subside ;  
 Her out-stretch'd Arms in length'ning Currents glide ;  
 Her Blood in Water trickles from her Veins ;  
 Nor ought to bless the God the Nymph retains. 220

He, as he hop'd, possess'd of all her Charms,  
 Dives in the Spring his vain deluded Arms.

While

While she, not wholly freed from the Surprise;  
<sup>1</sup> Flies in her Course, and circles as she flies.  
 So oft her Streams their destin'd Journey shun;  
 So oft in-isle the Banks by which they run;  
 Not thine, *Meander*, with such Circuits flow!  
 As yet, perhaps, her Change she did not know;  
 As yet, elusive kept her winding Pace;  
 Yet fled disdainful of the God's Embrace. 230

STILL does the Quickness of her antient Course,  
 That once enforc'd her Feet, her Streams enforce.  
 Which tumbling from the Mountain to the Plain  
 Thro' thee, belov'd <sup>2</sup> *Eblana*, seek the Main.

Y O U, on those Streams, Pride of those Streams, that dwell,  
 Yet tread the dang'rous Paths by which they fell;  
 Whether in Triumph you the *Phoenix* chuse,  
 (<sup>3</sup> *Phoenix* not happier in her Site than <sup>4</sup> *Muse*)  
 Or <sup>5</sup> *Strand*, to view the Conquests you have won;  
 (Where oft those Eyes supply the absent Sun) 240

<sup>1</sup> See the Description of the *Liffy*, in the Epistle Dedicatory, p. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Eblana*, the Name of *Dublin* in *Ptolomy*.

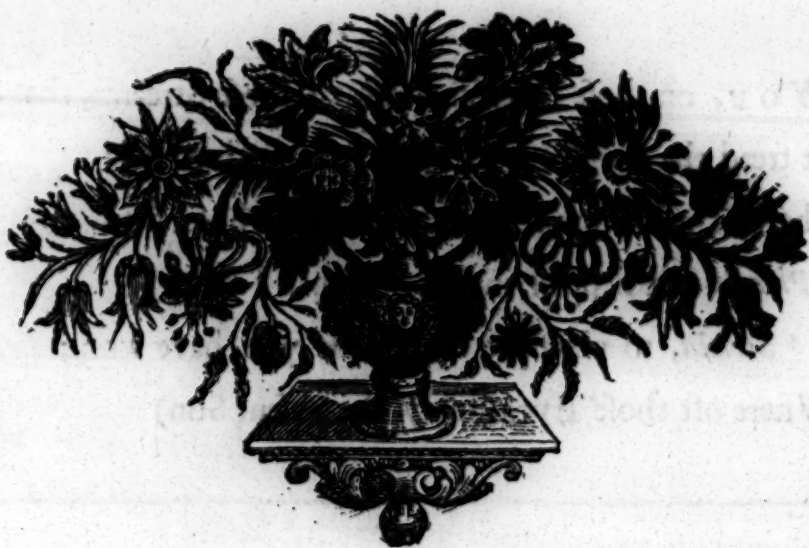
<sup>3</sup> *Phoenix-Park*, a Place of Tour (such as *Hyde-Park* near *London*) upon the *Liffy*, above *Dublin*.

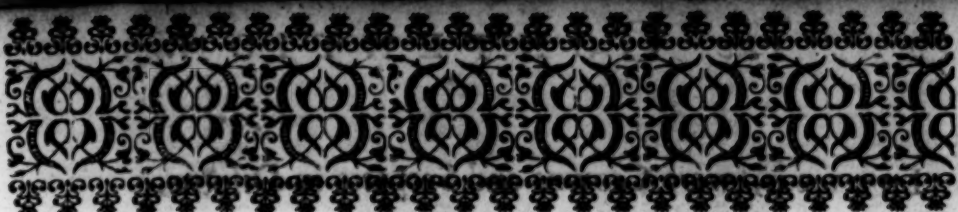
<sup>4</sup> Mr. *Ward's* Poem upon *Phoenix-Park*.

<sup>5</sup> The *Strand*, another Place of Parade, chiefly for the Winter-Season, upon the *Liffy*, lying below *Dublin*.



Cruel as fair ! attend th' allusive Tale,  
 Nor let Examples, if Intreaties fail !  
 Learn from dire Scorn what sad Disasters flow,  
 And make a proper Use of other's Woe.  
 Think not for Fondness to return Disdain, 245  
 Nor made for Pleasure to delight in Pain.  
 Better the Joys of mingling Souls to prove,  
 & Love is the true Equivalent of Love.  
 At least beware how *Venus* you provoke,  
 And urge of *Cupid* the revengeful Stroke. 250





# THE CONTENTION.

*By the same Hand.*

**T**HREE Goddesses of old for Beauty strove,  
*Juno, Minerva, and the Queen of Love;*  
*Jove, fearful of domestick Feuds, withdraws,*

Deputing *Paris* to decide the Cause:

*Paris* the Son of *Priam*, royal Swain,

Best Judge of Beauty on th' *Idalian* Plain,

Not that the Cause ask'd such discerning Eyes,

For who but Beauty's Queen cou'd merit Beauty's Prize?

THIS *Jove* knew well, and might have spar'd the Boy,

Who in the fatal Conflict lost his *Troy*;

Dar'd he, as he approv'd, adjudge the Strife,

Pert was the Daughter, turbulent the Wife,

And wou'd have led the God a scurvy Life.

INDEED,

INDEED, were Crowns and Scepters in Dispute,  
 Who but his Bosom-Wife had gain'd the Suit?  
 Had Spears or Helmets been the grand Contest,  
 The Daughter of his Brain deserv'd them best.  
 But since the Fairest must the Fruit attain;  
*Juno* and *Pallas* you contend in vain!  
 To *Venus* this Reward will be assign'd;  
 Or sure the Shepherd *Paris* must be blind!

BUT ah! had *Paris*, most discerning Swain,  
 Best Judge of Beauty on th' *Idalian* Plain!  
 Had *Paris* self been Judge of our Debate,  
 What strange Perplexity had been his Fate!  
 Which to esteem the worse or better Choice;  
 Left or most worthy the decisive Voice;  
 Where three such Rivals for Precedence strove!  
 And ev'ry Rival was a Queen of Love!

F I N I S.





